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Assembly California Legislature



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ASSEMBLY RULES COMMITTEE

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LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS
SELECT COMMITTEE
PREPARING CALIFORNIA FOR
THE 21st CENTURY
JOINT COMMITTEE

TASK FORCE
SPEAKERS TASK FORCE
ON TERRORISM

Dear Friends,

Over these last four years, representing some of California's finest residents and areas as an Assembly member has been extremely rewarding for me. I have had the pleasure of traveling to the various parts of the 25th Assembly district, from Murphys to Mammoth, from Oakdale to Oakhurst, from Columbia to Catheys Valley, from Modesto to Madera. Each place I have visited has been unique in its assets and in its obstacles, as well as in its people. During this time, I have developed a deep appreciation for all that the 25th district has to offer and have thoroughly enjoyed meeting people such as you at each place I visit.

Although visiting the beautiful spots in my district is a distinct highlight in my job, there have been many events here in Sacramento that have demanded attention. As you well remember, at the end of last year, we experienced something unprecedented, the recall of Governor Davis. After five years of over-spending, over-taxation, and governmental waste, the people of California had had enough. In one day, the old governor was ousted and a new one elected. Since that day we have welcomed Governor Schwarzenegger and have been excited for his plans for economic recovery in the Golden State.

The economic condition throughout the 25th Assembly district is obviously of great concern to me. In rural areas, recessions hit harder and job losses are more devastating. I am pleased with the progress the Governor is making and I am committed to seeing that these efforts benefit rural California as well as the rest of the state.

There are many other issues besides economic development that deeply affect rural California and the Central Valley such as healthcare, natural resources, and agriculture. Catastrophic wildfires are one specific example of an issue that primarily affects these rural regions. These fires are responsible for loss of life, property, and wildlife and for severely impacting air and water quality. In fact, for the first time in fourteen years, California suffered the loss of one of its own, CDF firefighter Eva Schicke, the first female CDF firefighter ever to perish in the line of duty. A tragedy such as this reminds us that we must be vigilant in our efforts to reduce the risk of runaway wildfires.

Within this brochure, you can read more about these issues as well as a variety of other topics. I appreciate you taking the time to read through it and I hope you find it informative. Additionally, please remember that in order for me to be as responsive as possible to your needs, it is essential for you to keep me informed of your concerns. Please call upon me if you are in need of assistance with state matters or to convey your position on issues and legislation. It has been an honor serving you and representing your interests in the State Legislature and I look forward to doing so over the course of the next legislative cycle.



Assemblyman
**Dave Cogdill: 2003-2004
Legislative Update**



2003-2004 legislative update

"Assemblyman Cogdill's work in the Assembly demonstrates his strong support for the agriculture industry."

*Rick Cosyns
Central Valley Farmer*

WATER & AGRICULTURE

California's economy relies heavily on agriculture and yet, year after year, the agricultural community is dealt blow after blow. This is one sector of California that is continually over-regulated and over-taxed, not to mention overly-burdened by litigation. California depends upon the success of its farmers. Ensuring their viability needs to be a top priority for lawmakers. As a member of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture, I am committed to helping California's farmers feed California, the nation, and the world.

- **Helping Farmers Deal with Onerous New Laws** – While air quality standards are very important, it is not fair to place an undue amount of responsibility on our farmers and ranchers to achieve those standards. I authored and co-authored several important pieces of legislation to assist farmers and ranchers struggling to meet new air quality rules and regulations.
- **Unifying the Agriculture Community** – I sponsored several Agricultural Forums to highlight concerns surrounding new laws passed last year providing for the phase-out of agricultural burning, as well as the ongoing impact of increased taxation and excessive litigation imposed on the agriculture industry. Participants included local, state, and federal elected officials, representatives of the agriculture industry, and representatives from the involved bureaucracies. These forums served to act as a catalyst to further unify the agriculture community and provide them with a direct line of communication with legislators and bureaucrats.
- **Fighting for Agricultural Resources and Increasing Water Supply** – Recently a federal court of appeals made a decision regarding Friant Dam in Fresno County that potentially threatens existing water supplies. I have joined the Agriculture Community in expressing concerns about this decision. The water from Friant Dam is used by many Valley farmers and altering the flow of water could be severely detrimental. Additionally, I strongly support and urge the building of Temperance Flat Dam as a means of securing more water for the Valley. I will continue to see to it that our farmers receive the resources upon which they rely.



CONSTITUENT SERVICES

If you have had difficulty dealing with a state agency, our office may be able to help. While we cannot guarantee a favorable response, we can contact a state agency on your behalf to ensure you receive an answer to your question or problem in an expedited fashion. My office offers a wide variety of constituent services. For example, when the DMV in Modesto closed down, my district office became a temporary DMV office as well. Whether you need assistance filling out a state form or have an inquiry for a state agency, we can help.

There are many ways to contact our office with your concerns. You can call our office at (209) 576-6425, visit our district office in Modesto at 1912 Standiford Ave. Suite 4, or you can visit one of our Mobile District Offices (see schedule below). These Mobile District Offices are frequently collaborative efforts wherein my staff is joined by staff from the offices of Senator Chuck Poochigian, Senator Jeff Denham, and Congressman George Radanovich. All offices enjoy working together to deliver the highest quality of services to our constituents.

Sonora, Tuolumne County

Economic Development Company of
Tuolumne County
39 N. Washington Street, Sonora
First and Third Monday of every month,
9-11 a.m.

Mariposa, Mariposa County

Mariposa County Library
4978 10th Street, Mariposa
First Thursday of every month, 9:30 –
11:30 a.m.

Oakhurst, Eastern Madera County

Madera County Library – Oakhurst
Branch
49044 Civic Circle, Oakhurst
First Thursday of every month, 1 – 3 p.m.

Modesto, Stanislaus County

Stanislaus County Executive Offices
1010 10th Street, 6th Floor, Modesto
First and Third Tuesday of every month,
9-11 a.m.

Chowchilla, Madera County

New Chowchilla Library
300 Kings Street, Chowchilla
Second Thursday of every month from
1 – 3 p.m.

Madera, Madera County

Madera County Board of Supervisors
Chambers
209 West Yosemite Ave., Madera
Second Thursday of every month,
9 – 11 a.m.

San Andreas, Calaveras County

Calaveras County Library
891 Mt. Ranch Road, San Andreas
Third Tuesday of every month, 2 – 4 p.m.

"Assemblyman Cogdill is extremely responsive to the needs of the community. His doors are always open and his staff is always ready to help."

*Tom Brudnicki
local farmer and small
business owner*



2003-2004 legislative update

"Assemblyman Cogdill has been committed to ensuring rural law enforcement personnel have the resources they need to do their job effectively."

*Sheriff Dan Paranick
Mono County*

PUBLIC SAFETY

Being safe in our homes and neighborhoods is as essential to a society as is food, shelter, jobs, and education. I have worked with Sheriffs, Police Chiefs, and Fire Chiefs to ensure that they have the tools to keep us safe. I am grateful to have been acknowledged by the Sheriffs as the "Assembly Member of the Year" and will continue to look after the interests of law enforcement because without them, nobody is safe.

- **Providing for Cooperation** – Search and Rescue is a vital aspect of law enforcement because peoples' lives are on the line. I carried legislation to universalize Search and Rescue procedures across the state. This is necessary because it will allow Search and Rescue missions to be performed more efficiently and effectively and ensure that there is no confusion at such a critical time.
- **Fighting the Proliferation of Meth** – Since being sworn in as an Assemblyman, one of my top priorities has been to combat the manufacturing of meth. The Central Valley is notorious as being one of the prime meth manufacturing areas in the nation and my goal is to change that. I introduced legislation to allow the Department of Justice to regulate the use of iodine, one of the primary ingredients of meth. If we keep closer watch on the chemicals used to make meth, we can effectively control the making of it.
- **Securing Rural Funding** – As Chair of the Rural Caucus, I worked hard to make sure our rural law enforcement officials receive the funding they need to do their jobs. This year, we were able to maintain funding for anti-meth efforts in the Central Valley, for law enforcement grants, and for airport security in rural areas. We cannot expect the highest quality of law enforcement if we do not provide law enforcement agencies with the necessary funding.
- **Protecting You from Identity Theft** – Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in California and the nation. California has become a national leader in trying to stamp out identity theft, yet it still ranks second in the nation in the number of identity theft victims. I have held town halls in several communities with the intent to educate the public and increase awareness of this crime. Through these town halls, I hope that we can prevent the invasion of people's lives, identities, and finances.



EDUCATION

Safe schools, accountability, and local control that empower parents and teachers are common sense requirements to secure a quality education. We need to ensure that all children have the highest quality of schooling possible so that these students of today will be well prepared to be the leaders of tomorrow.

- **Getting Kids to School** – Students throughout the state have very different needs. One need that often gets overlooked is transportation to and from school, particularly in rural areas. I appreciate the importance of giving these students an equal opportunity to excel, which is why I co-authored legislation that will apply a cost-of-living adjustment to public school transportation. Schools need to be focused on teaching our children, not how to afford getting them to and from school.
- **Directing Dollars to the Classroom** – In order to help provide for California's children, we must spend our limited resources where they are most needed. I co-authored three extremely important pieces of legislation to help reduce unnecessary costs that burden our schools. One would exempt schools from paying inflated wages on construction and save schools approximately 10% on construction. Another restores the ability of schools to contract for services normally performed by classified employees, saving schools up to \$100 million. The final bill reduces the amount schools are required to place in a maintenance reserve in order to increase the availability of local general fund money. These measures restore accountability to our schools and ensure that as much of our dollars reach the classroom as possible.
- **Creating a Common Voice** – Last year, as Chair of the California State Legislature Rural Caucus, I co-hosted a successful Rural Education Hearing which highlighted No Child Left Behind and featured Eugene Hickok, the Deputy Secretary of Education for the U.S. Department of Education. Currently, we are in the beginning stages of planning a follow-up summit for Fall of 2005. Events such as this both lend a stronger, more unified voice for the education needs and concerns of rural California as well as provide education communities with much-needed information.

"Assemblyman Cogdill has a genuine interest in the education of our children and believes strongly in local control and accountability."

*Pete Mehas
Fresno Superintendent
of Schools*



2003-2004 legislative update

"Assemblyman Cogdill's record demonstrates his commitment to find a balance between the efficient use of our resources and environmental protection."

*Gary Gilbert
Madera County Supervisor*

NATURAL RESOURCES & THE ENVIRONMENT

For yet another year, California has been ravaged by catastrophic fires due to over-accumulation of vegetation. While we have made headway with the Healthy Forests Initiative and the Forests with a Future Campaign in recognizing the devastation caused by wildfires, we still have work to do. We need to employ common sense approaches toward the management of our forests and all our natural resources.

- **Preventing Forest Fires** – In an attempt to prevent the extent of damage incurred from fires, I supported pieces of legislation to aid communities in obtaining federal funding for forest fire prevention and to allow the appropriate thinning of dense forests that pose a threat for wildfires. We must restore our forests to health and utilize proper forest management techniques – these measures give us the tools to do so.
- **Eliminating Duplicative Taxes** – In last year's budget, there contained a duplicative property tax (State Responsibility Area Fee or SRA fee) purportedly for fire suppression. In many cases, these fees were in addition to fees already being paid to local fire protection districts. It was an attempt by the State to pass on its responsibilities to landowners in Rural California. This is why I fought so hard to repeal this property tax assessment.
- **Defeating Harmful Legislation** – Year after year, bills that undermine efforts to make our forests healthy are introduced and my colleagues and I hold the line and try to defeat them. This year was no exception. Two bills in particular would have made managing our forests even more difficult by placing unreasonable limitations on thinning. My colleagues and I were successful in putting a stop to these harmful bills.
- **Building Coalitions** – For the fourth consecutive year, I co-hosted a Natural Resources Summit and Tour. This year's summit featured the new director of CDF, Dale Geldert, as well as Bernie Weingardt from the US Forest Service and Melinda Terry with the California Resources Agency. Following the summit, participants visited several forest-related sites in Tuolumne County for more detailed discussions and presentations on forest management techniques. The Natural Resources Summit and Tour are an integral means for placing more attention on our forests and their health.



CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE RURAL CAUCUS

The newly-revived California State Legislature Rural Caucus has made tremendous strides in advocating for issues of particular concern to rural California, including health care, education, and economic development. The Rural Caucus is comprised of 41 members from both houses of the Legislature and both parties. I am immensely pleased with the success the Rural Caucus has had in highlighting these issues and furthering the interests of rural communities throughout the state.

- **Establishing the Economic Development Council** – The needs of California's rural communities are often overshadowed by larger metropolitan areas. As the Chair of the Rural Caucus, I worked with The Sierra Economic Development District to establish the Rural California Action Network (Rural-CAN). The primary purpose of Rural-CAN is to improve coordination and cooperation between federal, state, and local level organizations in order to promote strong local leadership and encourage comprehensive solutions to rural development issues. Recently, Rural-CAN was awarded a \$50,000 rural development grant to assist in these endeavors.
- **Continuing and Strengthening our Efforts** – In order for the Rural Caucus to be as effective as possible, it is essential that we have staff dedicated to these efforts. I was able to secure funding for a new rural policy analyst through a grant from The California Endowment. This new analyst focuses on rural health-related issues that impact individuals, families, and communities in rural California.
- **Connecting to Rural California** – As Chair of the Rural Caucus, I worked with a broad spectrum of interested parties to pass legislation that will help to provide adequate basic telephone service in rural California at reasonable rates. Without this measure, telephone rates in rural areas would be astronomical. Those living in the rural parts of our State should not be penalized for where they live by having to pay exorbitantly for basic needs, such as telephone access.
- **Finding us on the Web** – You can find more information about the Rural Caucus or its members on the web at: www.assembly.ca.gov/ruralcaucus.

"Assemblyman Cogdill's leadership in the rural caucus has caught the attention of Governor Schwarzenegger and brought rural issues to the highest level."

*Harry Baker
Sierra Telephone*



2003-2004 legislative update

"Assemblyman Cogdill has been determined in his fight to ensure funding for our state's hatchery programs."

*Joann Ronci
Mono County Supervisor*

ANGLING

Fishing and boating are cherished American traditions that promote family values and unity as well as wholesome recreation and outdoor stewardship. The sport fishing industry produces over \$2.3 billion in retail sales, \$1.2 billion in wages and salaries, 43,000 jobs, and \$224 million in state taxes. Unfortunately, despite increased fishing license fees, California's hatcheries are experiencing decreased funding and have had difficulties delivering an adequate number of fish. Preserving and promoting sport fishing is essential for anglers and for the California economy.

- **Giving Anglers Their Fair Share** – Most anglers believe that their license dollars are used for raising and planting the fish that they catch. However, fishing license fees are used on a plethora of non-related programs and projects, even while the hatcheries are continually under-funded. I authored legislation that would have dedicated a portion of license fees to the hatchery system to ensure that our waterways are abundant with quality fish.
- **Preventing Hatchery Closures** – California's fish hatcheries have not received sufficient funding for several years. I fought hard for a provision in the State Budget that increases special funds to fish hatcheries up and down the State to protect hatcheries from closure. If hatcheries are forced to close, we will see a decline in the fish population in our lakes and rivers and a related decline in the tourism upon which so many California economies depend.
- **Ensuring Accountability** – As citizens, it is our civic duty to keep a watchful eye on the government and make it more accountable. I worked with the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to require an audit to be performed on the Department of Fish and Game's Preservation Fund, the fund into which all our fishing license fees go. This audit will ensure that the revenue collected from fishing license fees are being used appropriately.



JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

Since before Governor Schwarzenegger took office, California was in a steady decline, sinking under over-taxation, over-regulation, and over-litigation. These three factors detract from prosperity. As the fifth largest economy in the world, California and all its residents should be among the most prosperous. My colleagues and I are looking at California with a critical eye, hoping to make it a more business-friendly state. We continue to work on reducing exorbitant workers' comp costs to businesses and alleviating tax burdens and litigation threats.

- **Reducing Workers' Comp Costs** – With the passage of SB 899, the State has a roadmap to recovering from workers' comp costs that were spiraling out of control and contributing to businesses leaving the state. As a strong supporter of reforming the workers' comp system, I have both voted for and carried legislation to lessen this burden on California's businesses while providing for quality care for California's genuinely injured workers.
- **Removing the Threat of Frivolous Lawsuits** – In the final hours of session last year, the majority party pushed through the Legislature a horrible job-killing bill, SB 796, commonly called the "Sue Your Boss" law. This law allowed employers to be sued over minor infractions, such as the incorrect font-type on a state-required employee poster. We fought hard to undo the damage caused by this bill and I was pleased to support the measure to revise the harmful new law, thus improving the business climate in California.
- **Rolling Back the Car Tax** – When the governor took office, one of the first things he did was to repeal the illegal tripling of the vehicle license fee (VLF), approved by the prior administration. With the help of the Legislature and this year's budget, this was done without harming cities and counties who are the primary beneficiaries of the VLF. The money we all save on our VLF will find its way back into the market and help contribute to making California's economy stronger and more resilient.

"Assemblyman Cogdill understands the importance of job creation in this state and has worked to improve California's business climate."

Senator Chuck Poochigian



2003-2004 legislative update

"We are very happy Assemblyman Cogdill has recognized the great efforts of California veterans' organizations."

*Henry Wadahara
VFW State Commander*

SENIORS AND VETERANS

The seniors in our communities were the teachers, soldiers, doctors, and community leaders of yesterday. We cannot forget about them. We have our seniors to thank for their innovation, hard work, and sacrifices that make possible the prosperity we experience today. We have our veterans to thank for their selfless acts of courage and bravery that have guaranteed all the freedoms we continue to enjoy. It was an extreme honor to receive the "Legislative Special Recognition Award" by the Veterans of Foreign Wars for my efforts on their behalf because everything we legislators do for veterans pales in comparison to all our veterans have done for us.

- **Caring for Veterans' Families** – Veterans sacrifice so much for the good of our country as do their families. When a soldier is killed in the line of duty, the family should not have to worry about paying state taxes on the federal military death gratuity. I co-authored legislation to ensure that the federal gratuity stay in the hands of the family instead of coming back to the state in the form of taxes.
- **Improving Health Insurance Options for Seniors** – Health care is an issue of particular concern to our seniors and far too frequently, seniors have few options in this regard. For this reason, I supported an important bill that allows seniors over the age of 60 who have lost their employer-sponsored coverage, to purchase relatively less expensive health insurance. This measure helps bridge the gap for those seniors caught between the end of their employment-sponsored health insurance and their eligibility for Medicare.
- **Ensuring Services for Veterans** – Too often, our veterans have difficulties in securing the benefits due to them. There are many forms to be filled out and hoops to be jumped through. I was pleased to support legislation to allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to contract out to veterans' organizations to provide services to veterans. This measure will help ensure that veterans' claims are handled efficiently and swiftly.



HEALTH

Health care is a very personal and important issue to everyone, regardless of where they live, how old they are, or their health conditions. People are concerned about access, affordability, and quality of health care. As Legislators, we need to restore the patient-doctor trust and promote a stable health care system, a win-win for all involved.

- **Safeguarding Continuity of Care** – I authored legislation to require health care plans to make contract termination dates public. Full disclosure will encourage the plans and physicians and/or facilities to renegotiate contracts before they expire – this could prevent disruption of services. I am working to simplify the health care system so that it remains open, honest, and beneficial to all.
- **Improving Rural Access to Care** – A lack of primary care practitioners, specialty providers, and transportation continue to be significant barriers to access to health care. Telemedicine is quickly becoming one of the most preferred means of health care delivery by which rural residents have access to quality health care. To further improve access, I co-authored a bill that would expand telemedicine to include teleophthalmology and teledermatology so that people in rural areas can benefit from all that science has to offer.
- **Streamlining Health Care Practices** – Health care is a complicated matter. We are all too familiar with being sent from one doctor to another, from a physician's assistant to a specialist. I supported legislation to eliminate the requirement for a supervising physician to countersign every drug order administered by a physician assistant unless it is a serious drug. This will cut down on time and make the health care delivery system more efficient. The less time we spend in doctors' offices, the more time we can spend with our families.
- **Stopping Fraud** – Most people feel they pay too much for health care insurance. The last thing the system needs is for greedy doctors to defraud the system by recruiting patients to undergo unnecessary treatments and then fraudulently billing health insurers. I was a strong supporter of legislation to crack down on these doctors by threatening the loss of their licenses for such practices. The health care system has enough problems without these bad actors.

"As a result of Assemblyman Cogdill's work, healthcare providers can better serve their rural customers. He has proven himself to be extremely well-versed on a myriad of health related issues and the health community is fortunate to have him as a representative."

*Elnora George
CEO/CFO of John C. Fremont
Hospital*

